

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01
SSM-03 IO-13 OC-06 CCO-00 AID-05 PC-01 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7970

INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM

CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER

COMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE

SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, MAY 15, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 2657 (DTG 111319Z MAY 78)

1. SUMMARY. FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH AND FORMER PRIME
MINISTER RASHID KARAMI MET IN AN APPARENT POLITICAL RECONCILIA-
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TION. THE NEXT DAY FRANJIYAH WAS HOSPITALIZED WITH A HEART ATTACK.
NLP AND PHALANGE MILITIA CLASHED AS RESULT OF EFFORTS BY LOCAL
MILITIAMEN AT BEACHES NORTH OF JUNIYAH TO ESTABLISH PROTECTION
RACKETS. CAMILLE CHAMOUN DENIED THAT FRANJIYAH'S RECONCILIATION
WITH KARAMI OR THE NLP-PHALANGE CLASHES WOULD WEAKEN THE LEBANESE
FRONT. UNIFIL COMMANDER ERSKINE SAID THAT UNIFIL'S MISSION AND
THE CAIRO ACCORDS WERE "IN CONFLICT." CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS

EXCHANGED FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON. L'ORIENT-LE JOUR SAID THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS LIKELY TO REAPPOINT THE PRESENT CABINET. END SUMMARY.

2. FRANJIYAH-KARAMI RECONCILIATION.

A. FORMER PRESIDENT SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH AND FORMER PREMIER RASHID KARAMI MET IN TRIPOLI ON MAY 12 AT AN "ACCORD LUNCHEON" HOSTED BY THE SYRIAN ADF COMMANDER IN NORTH LEBANON. THE PRESS HAILED THE LUNCHEON AS A MAJOR POLITICAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE TWO NORTH LEBANESE LEADERS.

B. CAMILLE CHAMOUN, HOWEVER, SAID: "IF IT'S TRUE, PRESIDENT FRANJIYAH'S MEMORY IS VERY SHORT." ON MAY 13 CHAMOUN TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE LEBANESE FRONT WOULD NOT BE WEAKENED IF FRANJIYAH LEFT IT, "BECAUSE THE FRONT IS NOT MADE UP OF PERSONS, IT IS LEBANESE PUBLIC OPINION AS EMBODIED IN PERSONS." (COMMENT: FRANJIYAH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REST OF THE FRONT HAS BEEN DETERIORATING FOR MONTHS, AND HE HAS BEEN BOYCOTTING ITS MEETINGS FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. END COMMENT.)

3. FRANJIYAH HOSPITALIZED.

SULAYMAN FRANJIYAH WAS HOSPITALIZED ON MAY 13 BY A MILD HEART ATTACK. PRESIDENT SARKIS AND OTHER LEADERS HAVE CALLED ON FRANJIYAH AT THE HOTEL DIEU HOSPITAL.

4. NLP/PHALANGE CLASHES.

A. ON MAY 11 TWO PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND SEVERAL WOUNDED AS
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PHALANGE AND NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY (NLP) MILITIA CLASHED IN EAST BIEUT SUBURB OF DOWRA. THE FIGHTING APPARENTLY GREW OUT OF EFFORTS BY PHALANGIST AND/OR NLP MILITIAMEN IN MAAL MTAIN, A BEACH AREA NORTH OF JUNIYAH, TO ESTABLISH PROTECTION RACKETS. THAT SAME EVENING, THE LEBANESE FRONT'S UNITED COMMAND MET UNDER ITS LEADER BACHIR GEMAYEL AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE SAYING THAT THE "LEBANESE FORCES" HAD INTERVENED TO STOP THE FIGHTING AND PREVENT "ANARCHISTS" FROM TREPASSING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY. BACHIR DISPATCHED A FORCE TO CONTROL THE SITUATION IN MAAL MTAIN. ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, PHALANGISTS BUT NOT NLP MILITIAMEN ACCEPTED BACHIR'S ASSERTION OF AUTHORITY.

B. ON MAY 12 NLP MILITIAMEN FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE OFFICES OF THE RIGHTIST NEWSPAPER AL-BAYRAK AND TOOK ITS EDITOR MELHEM KARAM TO NEARBY NLP OFFICES. KARAM WAS RELEASED UNHARMED ABOUT 30 MINUTES LATER AND NLP PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN APOLOGIZED TO KARAM. (THE MILITIAMEN MAY HAVE BROKEN INTO THE OFFICES BECAUSE THE NEWSPAPER HAD PUBLISHED THE FULL TEXT OF THE UNITED COMMAND'S COMMUNIQUE, INCLUDING A PASSAGE IMPLICATING THE NLP.)

C. ON MAY 13 PHALANGE AND NLP MILITIAMEN CLASHED IN EAST BEIRUT. ONE PERSON WAS KILLED AND FOUR WERE WOUNDED, ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS.

5. ERSKINE INTERVIEW.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE MAY 15 EDITION OF THE WEEKLY MONDAY MORNING, UNIFIL COMMANDER GENERAL ERSKINE SAID THAT UNIFIL'S MISSION AND CAIRO ACCORDS "ARE IN CONFLICT." (COMMENT: THIS REMARK IS CERTAIN TO EXACERBATE RELATIONS BETWEEN UNIFIL AND THE PALESTINIANS. END COMMENT.)

6. SOUTH LEBANON.

A. ACCORDING TO REUTERS, PALESTINIANS IN CHATEAU BEAUFORT SHELLED A CHRISTIAN POSITION NEAR MARJAYUN THE EVENING OF MAY 12. RESIDENTS OF METULLA SAID THAT THIS WAS THE FIRST INCIDENT IN THE REGION FOR SOME DAYS. ON MAY 14 CHRISTIANS SHELLED NABATIYAH.

B. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS BASED ON EYEWITNESSES IN THE SOUTH, ISRAELI FORCES RETURNED MAY 13 TO THREE SOUTH LEBANESE CONFIDENTIAL

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TOWNS THEY HAD VACATED ON APRIL 30, ZABQIN (13 KILOMETERS SOUTH-EAST OF TYRE), TIBNIN, AND AIN MIZRAH (NEXT TO TIBNIN). ZABQIN IS WITHIN THE FRENCH AND SENEGALESE ZONES OF OPERATION, WHILE TIBNIN AND AIN MIZRAH ARE IN THE NORWEGIAN ZONE. ON MAY 14 THE ISRAELIS WITHDREW FROM ZABQIN, THE PRESS REPORTED.

C. THE FIRST 250 NIGERIANS ASSIGNED TO UNIFIL ARRIVED IN LEBANON ON MAY 13, AND 350 OTHERS ARE EXPECTED SHORTLY. ON MAY 14 THE NIGERIAN TROOPS BEGAN TAKING UP POSITIONS ABOUT 15 KILOMETERS EAST OF TYRE.

D. ON MAY 14 FRENCH SOLDIERS RESUMED THEIR PATROLS IN THE STREETS OF TYRE, ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR. TO THE EAST OF TYRE, FRENCH, NORWEGIAN AND SENEGALESE SOLDIERS SURROUNDED 25 ARMED PALESTINIANS WHO INFILTRATED INTO THE AREA NEAR ZABQIN, THE PAPER SAID. AFTER NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN UNIFIL AND THE PLO, THE PALESTINIANS REPORTEDLY WITHDREW WITHOUT FIGHTING.

7. STILL NO CABINET.

ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT-LE JOUR AND OTHER SOURCES, FORMATION OF A POLITICAL CABINET NOW APPEARS IMPOSSIBLE, AND THE PRESIDENT IS LIKELY TO "REFLOAT" THE EXISTING "TECHNOCRATIC CABINET."
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